

PROCEEDINGS

OF A

MASS MEETING

HELD IN

NEW ORLEANS, DECEMBER 6,

TO RETURN THANKS FOR THE SUCCOR EXTENDED
TO THE CITY DURING THE EPIDEMIC OF 1878.

A. W. HYATT, Stationer and Printer, 38 Camp st., N. O.
1878.





ORGANIZATION.

Pursuant to a call issued through the daily press, the citizens of New Orleans assembled at the Varieties Theatre, on the evening of December 6th, to offer public expression of their gratitude to those who had so generously befriended them during the epidemic of Yellow Fever which had scourged their city through the long, baleful summer of 1878.

At half-past seven o'clock the building, from pit to dome, was thronged with an audience of the best citizens of New Orleans. The dress circle and parquette, reserved for ladies, and for the members of the Commercial Convention then sitting, overflowed into the *foyer*, in which there was scarcely standing room. The stage was occupied by the Mayor and Administrators of the City and a large number of the most distinguished citizens of the State.

The meeting was called to order by S. H. Buck, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, who nominated Genl. F. N. Ogden, as the presiding officer.

The nomination was unanimously accepted, and on taking the chair, General Ogden, in acknowledgment of the high compliment paid him, said:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE—I feel justly proud of the honor conferred in calling upon me to preside at this meeting. We have

assembled to-night to express with grateful hearts our most sincere thanks for the generosity so nobly displayed toward us, at a time when our city was stricken with a dreadful disease, a generosity so free, so unstinted, as to stand without a parallel in the history of public charities. I am prepared to receive nominations for Secretary.

To that position Capt. F. L. Richardson was elected, on the motion of Capt. Buck.

Hon. Louis Bush then read the following list of Vice Presidents:

Hon. F. T. NICHOLLS, Governor.

L. A. WILTZ, Lieutenant Governor.

Hon. I. W. PATTON, Mayor.

ALLEN JUMEL, Auditor.

Hon. LOUIS BUSH, Speaker of the House.

E. A. BURKE, Treasurer.

Hon. GEO. L. SMITH, Collector of the Port.

R. M. LUSHER, Superintendent of Public Education.

Gen. CYRUS BUSSEY, President Chamber of Commerce.

R. S. HOWARD, Vice President Chamber of Commerce.

H. N. OGDEN, Attorney General.

WILL. A. STRONG, Secretary of State.

J. C. CLARK, President Jackson Railroad.

D. B. ROBINSON, Mobile Railroad.

S. CHOPPIN, President Board of Health.

PERRY NUGENT, President Cotton Exchange.

Wm. CUNNINGHAM, Vice President Cotton Exchange.

J. C. MORRIS, President Canal Bank.

- A. BALDWIN, President New Orleans National Bank.
 JAS. I. DAY, President Sun Insurance Company.
 THOS. A. ADAMS, President Crescent Insurance Company.
 E. A. PALFREY, President Factors' and Traders' Insurance Company.
 F. DOLHONDE, President Peabody Subsistence Association.
 F. L. RICHARDSON, President Relief Association.
 W. T. HARDIE, President Young Men's Christian Association.
 J. M. VANDERGRIFF, President Howard Association.
 AUG. REICHARD, President Ass'n Army of Tennessee.
 FRED. WINTZ, President City Railroad Company.
 W. VAN BENTHUYSEN, President Crescent City Railroad Company.
- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. EDWARD PILSBURY. | JOHN WILSON. |
| Hon. EDWARD BOOTH. | DAVID JACKSON. |
| Hon. C. J. LEEDS. | B. T. CHAMBERS. |
| Hon. J. Ad. ROZIER. | S. HAYWARD. |
| Hon. C. L. WALKER. | Jos. McELROY. |
| J. B. LAFITTE. | A. L. ABBOTT. |
| E. L. JEANRENAUD. | JOHN CRICKARD. |
| A. H. MAY. | CHAS. SIMON. |
| SAM'L DELGADO. | J. H. RARESHIDE. |
| A. W. BOSWORTH. | U. MARINONI. |
| A. W. HYATT. | E. D. LARUE. |
| Jos. BOWLING. | H. J. HEARSEY. |
| L. C. LEVY. | I. N. STOUTEMYER. |
| WM. FLASH. | FELIX LIMET. |
| CHAS. MANSON. | G. W. CARY. |

T. P. LEATHERS.	J. H. HANNA.
A. E. HUTCHINSON.	S. M. TODD.
J. B. VINET.	B. J. MONTGOMERY.
TH. GENERELLY.	W. C. SHEPHERD.
OSCAR J. FORSTALL.	F. FREDRICKSON.
JOHN PHELPS.	J. E. McDANIEL.
S. B. NEWMAN.	Capt. J. B. WOODS.
RICH'D MILLIKEN.	D. FATJO.
S. L. BOYD.	CARL KOHN.
O. F. VALLETTE.	G. L. HALL.
C. M. SORIA.	GEO. NICHOLSON.
W. H. LETCHFORD.	JACOB HASSINGER.
W. B. SCHMIDT.	M. F. BIGNEY.
H. MEADER.	J. T. SCHROEDER.
JAS. JACKSON.	MARSHALL J. SMITH.
H. D. COLEMAN.	L. W. BAQUIE.

Dr. J. T. SCOTT.

In a few earnest words the Chairman then introduced Rev. Dr. B. M. PALMER, who delivered the following touching, expressive and eloquent

P R A Y E R .

Almighty God! In Thy solemn providence we are brought together, this night, face to face with a past sorrow—the shadow of which still rests upon our stricken homes. We would anew bow in humble submission to Thy holy will, in the remembrance of this suffering. “Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?” Truly, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.” Yet whilst “clouds and darkness are round about Thee,

righteousness and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne." Help us to look up to Thee, and learn that there is nothing holy upon earth which is not sanctified through sorrow. This land is only the dearer to us, for all that it has endured; and we would, this night, lay it reverently upon the bosom of that providence which has smitten, and yet spared. We adore Thee that the fires, which burned so fiercely, did not utterly consume—that whilst suffering Thy just judgments, Thou didst not make "a full end"—that, in the midst of our anguish, it pleased Thee to quench Thy wrath in Thy mercy. Help us to accept this as the pledge of Thy goodness; which, after the severity of discipline, will open before us a happier future.

Our Father in Heaven! we were able to say amid the ravages of the pestilence, "let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great;" and to-night we glorify the wisdom and grace, which have wrought out of suffering and death a national blessing. It has ever been Thy way to bring good out of evil; and so, touching the springs of human pity and kindness, Thou hast caused a great charity to be born out of this public distress. Even as the clouds give forth rain to soften the earth, so Thou didst cause streams of generous help to flow from every portion of this country, and from countries beyond the sea, pouring life and comfort and health into those who were ready to perish. We can only requite this kindness by carrying it in our gratitude to Thy mercy seat. Stretch Thy hand of blessing

over those who stretched forth the hand of help to us. May this boundless charity of theirs flow back, through Thee, in countless mercies upon their hearts and homes. And may it please Thee to cause those threads of sympathy woven across a continent to grow stronger and stronger—that this great Congress of States, bound together in harmony and peace, may be prepared for a blessed destiny in the generations yet to come. All these memories we ask for Thy great name's sake; to which be ascribed praise and honor, and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The following gentlemen were appointed a committee to prepare resolutions expressive of the sentiments of the meeting: Dr. J. D. Bruns, Hon. Louis Bush, W. C. Black, John Wilson, A. H. May, Albert Baldwin and John B. Lafitte.

These gentlemen retired to prepare resolutions, and the orator of the evening, CHIEF JUSTICE MANNING, was introduced. He spoke as follows:

ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—The gathering here of a large number of visitors from many of the States of our country has been deemed a fitting occasion for the inhabitants of this city, and of the State, to give expression to their gratitude for that national outburst of generosity of which we have been the recipients. I am

here to-night to give force and utterance to that expression, while the committee are preparing resolutions for your action. Nothing but an occasion such as this would have induced me to intermit that abstinence from attendance on public meetings whieh the discharge of judicial duties, and a proper regard for official propriety, impose upon me.

During nearly a third of the present year pestilence has brooded over this city and breathed its poison through many other portions of our State. Familiarity with its attendant scenes of suffering and of death in former years had not allayed the terrors its advent now inspired. They were rather increased by the presence of features in the first appearance of the disease which distinguished it from all its predecessors. One of the most mournful of these was the readiness with which it attacked the young, and the celerity with which its baleful work was done. And this continued to characterize it until its fury was spent. Households in a few instances denuded of their members entirely, in others made desolate by the loss of their most cherished treasure, attested every day the mighty and almost resistless tread of this giant scourge that stalked in our midst, slaying whom it would.

But disease was not the only enemy our stricken people had to confront. The interruption of employment necessitated the cessation of wages. Hunger makes gaunt forms as well as disease, and while all energies were taxed to their utmost to attend the sick,

console the dying and bury those who could no longer hear the words of consolation, there arose the cry of the foodless, who seemed to have escaped the plague only to yield to the slower and more painful process of starvation.

This was an appalling condition. Those who never witnessed it cannot form any just idea of it. My words can give no adequate impression of it. Though I had the tongue of an angel, and spake as never man spoke, I could not bring before those whose eyes never beheld it the picture of a populous city where death was riding on the wings of the whirlwind and striking hither and thither, old and young, rich and poor, all classes, all conditions; while by his side or following close in his wake the gaunt spectre of famine came, gnawing the vitals of those whom the stroke of the destroyer had spared.

Our people did not shrink from their duties. I am not here to recount their praises. On the contrary, I must in their name tell the good deeds of others. But it is a part of the picture of that time which I am trying to produce, and none of its features should be omitted. Upon the first appearance of a necessity for action, organizations sprang up, the spontaneous outgrowth of generous hearts, whose object was to alleviate suffering in every form; to assist in rescuing the sick from a fate which seemed surely impending; to supply food to the hungry; to help the fatherless; to mitigate the horrors and avert the dangers which enveloped the whole popu-

lation as in a cloud. Physicians whose knowledge was equalled only by their courage, were already using all the appliances of the science whose mission is to detect the hidden sources of disease, and combat their operation. The voluntary offerings of our own people in aid of the efforts of the various associations, both in personal services and in money, were used with discriminating judgment and made the situation of the sick and destitute more tolerable. But where there was so large a field for expenditure of money, and so many and such various wants to be supplied, it was inevitable that help must come from without the State, or all efforts to continue the system of relief which had been organized must be abandoned. And what a condition of destitution, and suffering, and woe must ensue if that should come to pass.

At this juncture came the voice of compassionate sympathy, and the free gifts of substantial aid from our sister States, and in a little while these were supplemented by liberal donations from foreign countries. City and town and hamlet vied with each other, in proportion to their ability, and so lavish was their generosity that the contributions would doubtless have been more than was needed but for the long duration of the epidemic and the exceptional condition of our people. Never before has any epidemic found our people so ill-prepared to meet it. Poverty has made sad and rapid inroads upon us within the last few years. The sources of wealth seem gradually to have

dried up. The stream of commerce, which renovates the body politic and adds new vigor to its energies, had either slackened its course or ceased to flow, and hundreds, may I not say thousands, who could formerly help others now needed help themselves.

The liberal benefactions which came from so many sources, in unstinted measure, lifted us up from the abyss of despair into which the dread of inability to minister to the necessities of the sick, the needy and the dying was about to plunge us. As the measure of generosity to us was without limit, so is the gratitude we feel to those who gave. It is meet, right, and our bounden duty to return thanks for all blessings and benefits, first to Him who prompted the hearts of His servants to do these goodly deeds; next to those who yielded to the generous impulse and dispensed their bounty with such lavish hand.

I do not recall any other instance in which the donations were so numerous, or in the aggregate so large, or where they were so entirely spontaneous. No solicitation seemed necessary—no studied parade of the causes which made the donation essential. The simple unvarnished recital of the havoc death was making—of the suffering the survivors were undergoing, or were likely to undergo—of the heroic efforts the physicians, and nurses, and charitable associations, and clergy, and all the inhabitants were making to abate the scourge, and to minister to the wants of all who needed help, went straight to the hearts of all the people of this

country and of foreign lands, and evoked the active-spirit of benevolence in a manner and to a degree never before exhibited that I remember.

How many dying hours were soothed by these generous deeds the donors can never know. How many orphans rescued from suffering and death—how many widows comforted—how many of the poor, who were dependent upon daily labor for daily bread, rescued from despair and starvation—no earthly record will ever show. But all these things are written in the Book of Life, and of a truth they who thus cast their bread upon the waters shall find it return to them increased an hundred fold—increased by renewed blessings to themselves, and made purer and happier by the consciousness of having been the authors of so much happiness, the averters of so much misery.

For it is a truth that beneficence is two-fold in its action. It does good to its object by increasing physical comfort, warding off physical discomfort or pain, evoking the feeling of gratitude and purifying and elevating the moral tone. And it has a reflex action also. It generates high resolves and noble feelings in him who cherishes and acts upon it—exalts the mind and ennobles the character.

It is not the philosophic view of the principle of beneficence, or of its action upon the individual, that we concern ourselves with now. When men are absorbed by a profound feeling they do not stop to philosophize. And it is our feelings of grateful acknowledgment for

great benefits spontaneously bestowed that I am called here to-night to express.

Let, then, our visitors, when they return to their homes, tell those who sent their bounteous gifts to us, that the people of New Orleans and of our whole State thought it meet to assemble in mass meeting, that they might in a formal, authoritative and expressive manner tell them and all who contributed to our needs that our gratitude is as deep as their generosity was exhaustless—that all through the dark days, when death sat enthroned in our midst and wielded his sceptre with a ruthless hand, our hearts welled up with thankfulness to them for what they were doing in our behalf; and now, when health again prevails, and tears have given place to smiles, and grief to joy, save on those faces and in those hearts whose sorrowing cannot yet be assauged—now, when the noise of trade and the hum of busy life is begining to be renewed—tell them that we do not and shall not forget whence our succor came. And this message of gratitude we send also to the people of those foreign countries who were alike our benefactors, for by their benefactions they proved that no race and no clime can extirpate the feeling of a common brotherhood, or destroy the sentiment of a common humanity.

My friends and fellow-citizens, if I have not delivered the message you commissioned me to send in as fitting words as you wished, or as the occasion merited, I trust you will pardon my shortcoming. This I know—that no words can fitly express the full measure of gratitude

which you feel to those who remembered you in the hour of your affliction, and who did all they could do to alleviate it.

Dr. J. DICKSON BRUNS, on behalf of the committee on resolutions, then submitted the following preambles and resolutions, which were frequently interrupted by the enthusiastic applause of the assembly, and unanimously accepted as the sense of the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS, during the summer just past, New Orleans, in common with many of her sister cities of the South, has been scourged by a plague which closed all her avenues of trade, drained her resources, and utterly dried up her means of self-help; and

WHEREAS, in her impoverishment, multitudes of her sick and suffering citizens, from lack of food and clothing and medical care, must have been exposed to the extremity of human misery, and have perished without remedy, had it not been for the aid received from abroad; and

WHEREAS, It is becoming that the recipients of a charity so free and abounding should make due acknowledgment of their unutterable gratitude to the hearts that felt for and the hands that saved them in an hour of direst calamity;

Resolved, By the people of New Orleans, in mass meeting assembled, that the annals of human suffering and human sympathy show no parallel to the active benevolence exhibited by all classes of our fellow countrymen towards the City of New Orleans in her late affliction. Not merely were the naked clothed, the starving fed, and the sick and dying ministered to, but our darkness was cheered and our sinking spirits sustained by a charity which descended like some heavenly messenger, bringing healing on its wings to them that were ready to perish.

The first wail of distress had hardly gone up from our terror-stricken community before the agonizing cry for help was answered. Across the broad expanse of a vast continent, from North and South, and East and West, the tributary streams of beneficence rolled in one unebbing tide of overflowing generosity. Into the valley of the shadow of death in which we walked, it poured its life-giving waters, fresh from the gushing springs of human affection. Never has any people before been the recipients of so grand a charity; never can its impressive lesson of humanity be forgotten.

Resolved, That in this universal testimony of our fellow-countrymen that we are one forevermore, in woe as in weal, we recognize the benignant voice of a great people, which should silence with a stern rebuke the evil utterances of wicked men, who, for ignoble and selfish ends, would arouse once more the clamors of sectional discord; and we declare, as our unanimous sen-

timent, with the unaffected sincerity of grateful hearts, that no difference of political creed can weaken, and no wiles of designing politicians sever the ties which bind us, by the most sacred and tender memories, in the bonds of a national brotherhood, one and indissoluble.
[Applause.]

Resolved, That in the heroism and self-sacrifice displayed by the physicians and nurses, who, at the cost of many gallant spirits, faced the deadly terrors of the pestilence in their mission of humanity, and in the utter self-abnegation of that gallant soldier, the late Lieut. Benner, of the United States army, we acknowledge, with tears for their fate and gratitude for their devotion, the surpassing love, of whose depth and sincerity they gave this highest proof, that they laid down their lives for us. [Applause.]

Resolved, That to those friends in foreign lands who so freely contributed to the relief of our people, whether of kindred or alien nationalities, our most fervent thanks are due, and are hereby tendered.

Resolved, That to all societies, corporations and companies, as to communities and individuals unnamed, who, in our great distress, aided us by word or act, the people of New Orleans, as with one heart, feel gratitude unspeakable.

After the adoption of the resolutions, and a benediction by Dr. Palmer, the meeting adjourned.

